

CLARK'S ISLAND

In Sunday's *Boston Herald Advertiser*, Jim Morse has a story on historic Clark's Island, where there is no electricity, TV or telephone. Cooking is by propane gas, reading by kerosene lamps. There are no roads or automobiles, but thousands of rabbits. No one has lived on the island during the winter since the 1930's. Only 11 houses dot the island.

Here, the Pilgrims landed before going ashore in Plymouth.

A few excerpts from the Morse article:

In 1620, the Pilgrim Fathers, finding no water or shelter on Cape Cod, left the Mayflower at anchor there and sailed in a small shallop across the bay to find a place for their settlement.

A severe winter storm overtook them, and they found shelter on a island, where they rested, Dec. 20, held the first

Sabbath service. The pioneers named the bit of land, which comprises 83 acres, Clark's Island for the mate of the Mayflower.

The site of the Pilgrims' first Sabbath observance is marked by Election Rock, so named because the Pilgrims elected to offer their prayers at that spot, which bears a plaque reading: "On the Sabbath Day We Rested - 20 December 1620."

The island is steeped in history. Around 1642, the Plymouth Colony established a salt works there. And when King Philip's War broke out in 1675, some 1200 "praying Indians," who had left their tribes to become Christians, were transplanted to the security of Clark's Island, where they could be both protected and watched. Not before or since has the island been so densely populated.

In the decade of the 1960s, Sarah Wingate Taylor, poet, authoress and conservator of Pilgrim lore, herself a direct descendant of Gov. Edward Winslow, who had landed on Clark's Island with the half-frozen men from the shallop on that December night in 1620, did much to perpetuate her heritage.

On her death in 1964, she bequeathed "Cedarfield," the second house built on the island, to a trust now administered by the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society. The land encompasses broad acreage around the house and through the woods to include Election Rock.

Visitors are greeted at the island's dock by a sign which warns: "Private - This Dock for Use of Clark's Island Residents

and Guests Only."

"It isn't that we aren't hospitable," explains Dr. George Gardner, retired as chief of psychiatric service at Boston Children's Hospital and professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, a Duxbury resident who owns a home and several acres on the island, "but we have a very real and decent fear of fire."

"We have no protection whatsoever. That's why we are apprehensive about strangers. A carelessly discarded match or cigarette could burn out the island."

Through the years, however, the island has had many distinguished visitors - from Henry David Thoreau and Louisa May Alcott to Truman Capote, who spent a summer on the island during the 1950's writing *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Gardner recalled.

Dr. Gardner is a member of the Clark's Island Assn., which Barbara Muldowney, the local realtor handling the sale of an island estate, including a 12-room Dutch Colonial house, refers to as "the CIA."

The purpose of "the CIA," Gardner says, is to keep the paths mowed - there are no sidewalks - and to take care of the island's well, which has been providing drinking water since the late 1600's.

"I love the island," he says, "because there's no better place to relax. I just sit and read or go for a swim or go sailing. And I have a battery radio to follow the Red Sox."